

CALT Meeting | Community Engagement & Outreach

CALT Participants: Lisa Busch, Nils Andreassen

State Participants: Nikoosh Carlo, Danielle Meeker

Public Listeners:

Lisa Busch: Trying to think about why I want the education to be a separate policy statement, and when you look at all of the policy statements it seems like communication really needs to be separated. Education and communication get bunched together, but they shouldn't.

Nils Andreassen: Let's do that. Let's focus on communication piece.

Lisa Busch: I talked to a colleague of mine who comes from public radio and science reporting. I invited her to be part of this and get some ideas on how we could reach different audiences. I have a bunch of ideas, but it doesn't sound like we're quite there yet. My most immediate idea was to reach out to the Governor's communication team.

Nils: For the State's side, they've got a draft strategy in place for this process. Our upcoming goal is to reengage them and focus in on the next coming months and next steps. Earlier strategy was how to focus on the process; now we're looking at the outcomes of the process. If we focus on what we're aiming for, in my mind the strategy that we're developing is a recommendation that's part of overall strategy to the Governor. The communications strategy for post-September is related to recommendations for how agencies and communications team will be involved, potential audiences, structure. It's less of a strategy for the CALT and more of recommendations for the State's communication. Does that sound right?

Busch: It does. The tricky part is that these recommendations don't have legislation attached to them in the future, right?

Nikoosh Carlo: One of my roles is to think about what the next step could be. That's definitely on my mind. We're looking at which of these elements could be transformed into legislation.

Busch: So the communications part could have a legislative component?

Nils: Potentially. Do you think that the communications strategy should have a legislative component?

Busch: That's the tricky part. Is there going to be a bill associated with the communications action item?

Carlo: I'm trying to think of an example.

Busch: It would be really hard. You make a recommendation that the Governor's comms team works with this group or with the individual agencies then the Governor can dismiss that because it's not legislated.

Nils: I don't think we should assume that the things that we produce don't have teeth.

Carlo: Nor do they need legislation attached to it. There's a lot of things we can do outside of it.

Nils: The comms plan is more broadly speaking about issues that might be in the policy, identifying messages and examples for the general public or stakeholder groups. It's less about a legislative strategy. We should parse that out.

Busch: That makes sense to me. The implementation policy, in terms of yours and Nikoosh's job is going to be writing legislative language and talking to legislators, right?

Nils: Yes. The Governor's Office has a process for that.

Busch: So our strategy is more about building the constituency to support that legislation, right?

Nils: Mostly about informing Alaskans about what's in there (the technical/complicated/abstract components) without the advocacy component. When we talk about relocation or economic opportunity, what does that mean?

Carlo: Right now we've talked about the comms strategy being centered around how CALT members communicate outward. What about the other side of things of gathering information? That's a different thing.

Busch: You mean what's the public process so that it's a two-way exchange of information? A place where people can voice their interests and concerns?

Carlo: Or how do you reach out to specific stakeholders?

Nils: Stakeholder engagement.

Nils: If that's what we're hoping for, then our next steps are to start drafting that. I can make a structure for what that looks like, but maybe Lisa you could help with creating a framework. Then we can draw in others and get the process started.

Busch: Okay. SO informing Alaskans about what's in the plan and being able to set up a system so stakeholders are involved in the policy. Are those the two main things? Is it also about making recommendations about messaging, or is messaging part of those two main things?

Nils: It could be.

Carlo: I see that as "how do you tell people about the plan"?

Nils: That's what came out of the April 12th meeting for me. How do we simplify this message for people?

Busch: But the goal isn't just to inform people – it's to engage them. Don't we want them to feel good about it? I feel like that's the trick. There are a million ways that we could tell people that this is happening, but we want them to feel that it's a good idea.

Nils: I think the main point is educating the public. Providing examples, recommending engagement strategies for how to reach different audiences. For each issue area, we might be able to identify primary audiences. That brings us back to an engagement strategy. Overall, the outcome would be that outreach process. Make people aware enough and comfortable enough that they can also support it. What we often find is people don't understand it or they're only paying attention to one part. Need to build awareness of what it means.

Busch: Should these recommendations be a list of recommendations under these themes, or should they be in a different format.

Nils: If there are different examples of communications strategy that you've seen, we could use that? We want to use best practices. Within it, we can link back to clarifying where any one recommendation connects with a policy statement.

Busch: These are things that would be utilized after the Governor has accepted the policy, right?

Nils: The AO asks us to deliver a strategy.

Busch: So it's okay if I bring in other people?

Nils: Yes.

Busch: You're also bringing in people from the Governor's comms teams?

Nils: Yes.

[...]

Busch: At the listening session in Sitka, there were so many different ideas. Some of them were very local and not related to the plan. One message that was appealing during WWII was "we can do it". That homesteader/frontier attitude that Alaskans are invested in, whether you live in Anchorage or a small town. That feeling that when we pull together, we can do something. I think Nils is right that there are complex messages in here, but we're going to have to make it seem like something simple, or at least something that we can do if we all to pull together.

Nils: One of the things we talked about with the Lt. Governor was the balance between a practical strategy and something that's inspirational. We can do it by setting high goals and accomplishing them.

Carlo: It's good to have large goals as well as small tangible things that individuals can do.

Nils: The other thing I've heard is that this shouldn't be all doom and gloom. There's a lot of opportunity, and there are things that Alaskans are already doing.

Carlo: And hope.

Nils: Pulling out examples of what cities are already doing – electric vehicles in Juneau or electric charging stations in Cordova.

Carlo: Kodiak being nearly 100% renewable.

Nils: Methane capture at the Anchorage landfill.

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Busch: I like that idea of having different examples from different corners of the state.

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Busch: This is great. I'll talk to Katie, Elizabeth, and Berett to get them talking about this.

Nils: Sounds good.